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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 09/30/08

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ARTICLES:

(1) Poll on Aso cabinet, political parties

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
September 26, 2008

Questions & Answers
(T = total; P = previous; M = male; F = female)

Q: Do you support the Aso cabinet?

T P M F
Yes 45 (25) 45 45
No 26 (52) 30 23
Not interested 27 (21) 23 29

Q: (Only for those who answered "yes" to the above question) Why?

T P M F
Because the prime minister is from the Liberal Democratic Party 15
18 13
Because something can be expected of the prime minister's leadership
42 43 42
Because there's something friendly about the prime minister 20 12
24

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Because something can be expected of the prime minister's policy
measures 16 22 14

Q: (Only for those who answered "no" to the above question) Why?

T P M F
Because the prime minister is from the Liberal Democratic Party 29
34 25
Because nothing can be expected of the prime minister's leadership
10 7 12
Because there's something imprudent about the prime minister 21 16
25
Because nothing can be expected of the prime minister's policy
measures 36 39 33

Q: Which political party do you support?

T P M F
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 28 (24) 32 26
Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 22 (24) 32 17
New Komeito (NK) 4 (4) 4 4
Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 3 (3) 3 3
Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 2 (1) 1 2
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 0 (1) 0 0
New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) 0 (0) 0 0
Other political parties 1 (1) 1 1
None 37 (39) 25 43

Q: Do you appreciate Prime Minister Aso's appointees for his
cabinet's posts and for the LDP's executive lineup?

T P M F
Yes 36 32 38
No 48 58 43

Q: Prime Minister Aso, in his campaign for the LDP presidential
election, insisted that the government should prioritize economic
stimulus measures over fiscal reconstruction for the time being. Do
you appreciate this standpoint?

T P M F
Yes 66 69 65
No 24 25 24

Q: In the LDP presidential election, whether to continue or review former Prime Minister Koizumi's structural reforms was also a campaign issue. Do you think the policy course of structural reforms should be continued or reviewed?

T P M F
It should be continued 29 36 25
It should be reviewed 61 57 63

Q: Which do you think should come first, dissolving the House of Representatives for a general election or passing a supplementary budget to deal with rising oil and food prices?

T P M F
General election 22 28 19
Supplementary budget 68 65 70

Q: Who do you think is more appropriate for prime minister between TOKYO 00002708 003 OF 012

Prime Minister Aso and DPJ President Ozawa?

T P M F
Prime Minister Aso 42 41 42
DPJ President Ozawa 19 28 14
Neither is appropriate 30 24 34

Q: Which one between the LDP and the DPJ would you like to see win in the next election for the House of Representatives?

T P M F
LDP 41 (31) 40 42
DPJ 37 (46) 46 32
Other political parties 11 (12) 6 14

Q: Two successive prime ministers, namely Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Fukuda, stepped down a year after coming into office. Will you take this into consideration when voting in the next election for the House of Representatives?

T P M F
Yes 44 46 44
No 47 47 47

(Note) Figures shown in percentage, rounded off. "0" indicates that the figure was below 0.5 PERCENT. "No answer" omitted. Figures in parentheses denote the results of the last survey conducted Aug. 1-2. The previous cabinet support rate for the Fukuda cabinet.

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted Sept. 24-25 over the telephone across the nation on a computer-aided random digit sampling (RDS) basis. A total of 1,299 households with one or more eligible voters were sampled. Answers were obtained from 786 persons (61 PERCENT).

(2) Prime Minister in Diet policy speech, filled with a confrontational mood, aimed at Diet dissolution, throws questions back at the DPJ

ASAHI (Top play) (Excerpts)
Eve., September 29, 2008

Prime Minister Aso this afternoon delivered his first policy speech before the two chambers of the Diet since coming into office. He brought up five points: 1) the formation of agreements in the Diet; 2) the supplementary budget; 3) the creation of a Consumer Affairs Agency; 4) the Japan-U.S. alliance and the United Nations; and 5) continuation of refueling operations in the Indian Ocean. The contents of each of the five points brought up in the speech were unusual in that they were posed as if answering questions by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) with specific responses. He seemed to be making an opening move to draw out the opposition camp into policy talks, and if they refused to respond, to dissolve the Lower House. He also aimed to lay out the points at issue for the general election campaign.

In the speech, he first brought up the issue of Diet management. Using the example of the gasoline and other provisional taxes, which were briefly scrapped, he criticized: "The DPJ consistently has taken a stance that places politics first and the lives of the people second and third." He proposed rules for agreement formation among the two parties, saying, "Is the DPJ prepared to do that?"

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On economic policy, the Prime Minister brought up his pet argument of immediate economic stimulation, mid-term fiscal reconstruction, and mid to long-term economic growth through reforms. He appealed for a swift passage of the supplementary budget for this fiscal year in order to implement the comprehensive economic package that was compiled in late August. To the DPJ, he asked, "If there is something in it that you cannot swallow, I would like you to state it in the interpellations along with your argument." He challenged the party: "It would be fine if you present your own proposal. However, I would like you to tell me where the fiscal resources will come from."

(3) Obuchi-headed LDP branch received donations from companies punished by former Defense Agency

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 31) (Full)
September 29, 2008

The Liberal Democratic Party Gunma Prefecture fifth election branch headed by Declining Birthrate Minister Yuko Obuchi received at least a total of 7.36 million yen in donations from six companies that had been punished with suspension from the list of designated contractors and other penalties by the Land, Infrastructure, and Transport Ministry and municipal governments, it was learned on Sept. 26.

"We want to act quickly to return the money in a way convincing to the public," a branch source said.

According to the branch's political funds reports between 2003 and 2007 and other documents, the donations came from the six companies, including Sanko Air Conditioning Co. (Kita Ward, Osaka City) and Daikin Industries, Ltd. (Nishi Ward, Osaka City) that had been punished with the suspension from the list designated contractors over a bid-rigging scandal involving the now-defunct Defense Facilities Administration Agency (DFAA) as well as other penalties.

Among the six companies is one that was punished with a three-month suspension of designation by the Shimane prefectural government after a warning from the Fair Trade Commission.

Each company donated between 100,000 yen and 1 million yen a year. Ikeno Tsuken Corp. (Kita Ward, Tokyo) made a contribution even in March 2006 when it was not allowed to take part in biddings due to a punitive step equivalent to the suspension of designation.

In March 2006, the Defense Agency took a punitive step equivalent to the suspension of designation not allowed to join tenders against 178 companies, including those that submitted bids for a DFAA-ordered project over which persons concerned had been arrest and indicted over bid-rigging.

(4) Consul General Maher says Futenma is key to returning six facilities

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Full)
September 29, 2008

U.S. Consul General for Okinawa Kevin Maher delivered a speech, "Current Situation and Future Prospects of U.S. Force Realignment, " at an International Visitors Program reunion held in Naha City on

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Sept. 26.

He explained that the return of six installations south of Kadena Air Base were connected the timeframe for the relocation of Futenma Air Station and the completion of the removal of U.S. Marines to Guam that are set for 2014. He added: "It is not clear when the facilities south of the base will be returned as the next step. The return is conditioned on whether the relocation of Futenma succeeds."

"The two governments have been able to confirm whether or not the capabilities of the facilities to be returned can be relocated to other existing installations." The consul general also explained that final coordination for drawing up the master plan, initially planned for March 2007, has stalled.

Asked if the return of bases south of Kadena Air Base has not moved forward because the realignment of U.S. forces is a package deal, the consul general explained: "Unless Futenma functions are relocated to Camp Schwab and the 8,000 Marines moved to Guam, the support facilities at Camp Kinser (Makiminato Service Area) cannot be relocated to Camp Hansen, Camp Schwab, and Guam. They are all interrelated as a package deal."

(5) U.S. nuclear aircraft carrier arrives at Yokosuka amid protests by civic groups

AKAHATA (Page 1) (Excerpts)
September 26, 2008

The (97,000-ton) nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS George Washington (that accommodates about 5,600 crew members) arrived at Yokosuka Naval Base in Kanagawa Prefecture, Sept. 25, amid civic groups staging rallies against the deployment.

The carrier replaces the conventional aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk, which completed its mission in Japan in May. It is the first time for a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to be deployed in Japan. About 70 PERCENT of the Yokosuka citizens are opposed to the deployment, keeping in mind risk from the permanent deployment of an aircraft carrier and fearing nuclear incidents, remembering a fire that broke out while crew members were smoking on the USS George Washington. Civic groups staged rallies in many locations from morning to night yesterday.

The world's largest warship entered the Bay of Tokyo around 08:00 and then was berthed at No.12 Pier in the base at 10:05.

In a ceremony held by the governments of Japan and the U.S., Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter said that the deployment of a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier "is part of the commitments to the Japan-U.S. alliance." U.S. Ambassador to Japan Thomas Schieffer expressed his appreciation for Yokosuka Mayor Ryoichi Kabaya for concurring with the deployment of the nuclear aircraft carrier, saying: "I appreciate him for his firm friendship and understanding." A message from Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone was also read at the ceremony. On the fire on the George Washington and a series of radiation-leak incidents, however, there was reference neither to their causes nor what preventive measures would be taken.

(6) Editorial: Yokota airspace returned-Metropolitan skies made more

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convenient

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Full)
September 23, 2008

Flight routes can now be easily set for westward-bound passenger planes from Haneda Airport in Tokyo.

That is because the Yokota airspace, which expands over the west of the airport and is under the air traffic control of the U.S. Air Force's Yokota Air Base, has now been returned in part to Japan.

The skies over the metropolitan area are now more crowded. Accordingly, it is very significant that new air routes have been

secured for flights to and from Haneda.

The Japanese and U.S. governments have also agreed to consider necessary conditions by fiscal 2009 for the United States to return the Yokota airspace in its entirety. We want the two governments to push ahead with talks for specifics about the airspace's overall reversion.

The Yokota airspace came under the Allied Powers' control after the end of World War II. After that, its traffic control was transferred to the U.S. military. Since then, the U.S. Air Force, based on the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement, has controlled the air traffic of U.S. military and Self-Defense Forces aircraft to and from the Yokota, Atsugi, and Iruma bases.

In May 2006, the Japanese and U.S. governments agreed on the Yokota airspace's partial reversion as a step in the process of realigning U.S. forces in Japan. This is the eighth time for the United States to return part of the airspace. This time, however, the United States has returned 20 PERCENT of the airspace's area and 50 PERCENT of its volume.

In the past as well, civilian aircraft was allowed to pass through the airspace with permission from the U.S. military. For safety and other reasons, however, the greater part of civilian airplanes from Haneda Airport to such destinations as Kyushu, South Korea, and China used to turn and make a steep climb over Tokyo Bay to fly over the Yokota airspace.

With the airspace's reversion this time, the Yokota airspace's altitude is now markedly lower. Civilian aircraft can now easily fly over the Yokota airspace without needing to make a steep climb.

The flight time of westbound flights from Haneda to destinations will be three minutes shorter on average, according to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. Its economic effect, such as reducing fuel costs, will total 9.8 billion yen.

In October 2010, a fourth runway will be placed in service at Haneda Airport. This will make it possible for the airport to handle an annual total of more than 400,000 flights, an increase of 140 PERCENT from the airport's current handling capacity. The annual number of international flights to and from such cities as Shanghai and Seoul is also expected to increase to 60,000.

Setting new westbound flight routes will also give a significant impetus to the internationalization of Haneda. It is essential to further improve flight routes before the airport's reextension and

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make the most of the effects of airspace reversion.

The task left to Haneda is how to set flight routes over the heart of Tokyo.

In principle, the skies over the heart of Tokyo are currently excluded from flight paths out of consideration for the noise problem and other circumstances. Instead, there are many flight routes over Chiba Prefecture. This has caused a strong feeling of unfairness.

If the skies over the heart of Tokyo can be better used for civil aviation, there will be more leeway for flight paths, and the metropolitan skies can be more convenient. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport and the Tokyo metropolitan government should discuss this matter in earnest.

(7) Nippon Oil to expand oil production in Vietnam, followed by Idemitsu

NIKKEI (Page 7) (Full)
September 28, 2008

(Takashi Nishioka, Ho Chi Minh)

Nippon Oil Corp. has started producing crude oil at a new oil field

off the southwest coast of Vietnam. The company will increase production in that nation by about 20 PERCENT . Idemitsu Kosan Co. will also begin producing oil in Vietnam for the first time. Although the domestic market of gasoline and other fuels, key products for oil wholesalers, has been shrinking, oil prices remain high. Given this, the companies decided to quickly expand oil production in Vietnam.

Nippon Oil developed the new Phuong Dong oil field jointly with state-run Petrovietnam. The field is located north of the Rang Dong field, where the two companies have jointly produced crude oil. The daily output at Phuong Dong is expected to increase from the current 12,000 barrels to 15,000 barrels in 2009, of which Nippon Oil will have an interest of about 5,000 barrels.

Nippon Oil has an interest of 16,000 barrels in the daily output at Rang Dong, but now that 10 years have passed since production started there, production volumes are on the decline.

To cover the reduced volume, the company will boost the daily output at Phuong Dong to about 19,000 barrels in 2009. The company also plans to excavate about seven wells with Petrovietnam by investing approximately 9 billion yen in 2009 as part of efforts to increase oil production.

Idemitsu Kosan plans to develop an oil field off the southern coast of Vietnam with Petrovietnam and a Russian oil company. About 70 billion yen will be invested in building production facilities, of which Idemitsu will shoulder about 5 billion yen.

The project team plans to start production in the latter half of fiscal 2009. The estimated daily output will be about 20,000 barrels, and Idemitsu will be given an interest of about 1,500 barrels.

Produced in Vietnam is light oil from which such high-value-added

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oil as gasoline and diesel oil can be extracted considerably easily. Since the Vietnamese crude is low-sulfur, the product is priced high. Nippon Oil and Idemitsu intend to sell the Vietnamese oil to China, Singapore, Australia, and other countries.

Sales of gasoline in Japan in July dropped by 6.8 PERCENT below the same period a year ago, recording the third consecutive monthly decline. Sales of all kinds of fuel oil, including light oil, also decreased 3.5 PERCENT , showing that the Japanese oil market is reducing as a whole.

Oil prices are staying high, with West Texas Intermediate (WTI) exceeding 100 dollars per barrel, seen from a historical angle. Since there are few cases of entry of U.S. and European oil majors into Vietnam, unlike their proactive access to oil-producing countries in the Middle East and other regions, Japanese firms are expected to accelerate moves to expand oil production in Vietnam in the future.

(8) Post-Kyoto Protocol: Japan's plan for measures to combat global warming revealed; Proposal for new protocol; Efficiency goal for developing countries

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Full)
September 27, 2008

The government is expected to submit a proposal for a framework for measures to address global warming to be adopted in 2013 (post-Kyoto protocol) to the 14 Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP14) to be held in December. A full version of the draft was revealed on September 26. According to the draft, the government will propose adopting a new protocol, instead of extending the Kyoto Protocol framework. Though the proposal does not seek main developing countries, such as China, to set global warming greenhouse gas reduction targets, it imposes a certain designated obligation on them, by asking them to set caps on global warming gas emissions with binding power.

The first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, during which Japan and the European Union (EU) are obligated to cut carbon emissions, is 2008-2012. For a framework for 2013 and beyond, talks are under way with the aim of reaching an agreement by the end of next year. The U.S., the largest carbon emitter in the world, has opted out of the framework, dissatisfied with developing countries assuming no obligation to cut emissions. Japan has decided to seek the adoption of a new framework in order to urge the U.S. and China to join it.

The new framework will mandate advanced countries to set a nation-specific cap to be achieved as the Kyoto Protocol does.

In the meantime, it seeks main developing countries, such as China and India, to set an energy improvement goal, such as the amount of energy needed to produce 1 ton of iron. The goals are obligatory with binding power attached to them. Industrialized countries will set nation-specific reduction targets by determining their own total emissions amount and work out reduction rates, by comparing that amount with the amount of emissions in more than one base year. Under the Kyoto Protocol, reduction goals were set, based on the base year of 1990. However, under the new framework, more than one base year, such as a year with the latest data and 1990, will be adopted.

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Outline of Japanese proposal

- ? Adopt a new protocol or a revised protocol as the next framework
- ? Set nation-specific caps for industrialized countries and obligate them to achieve their goals.
- ? Goals are to be indicated in terms of reduction rates from more than one base year, including a year with the latest data, and total emissions cuts.
- ? Main developing countries are to set energy efficiency goals in main areas and in the economy as a whole as a goal with binding power.
- ? Other countries are to submit a national action program.

(9) Government proposal for post-Kyoto protocol framework obligates emerging countries to achieve goals

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)
September 27, 2008

A proposal for a next-term framework to combat global warming to be adopted in 2013 (post-Kyoto Protocol framework) prepared by the Japanese government was revealed on September 26. According to the proposal, the post-Kyoto Protocol framework will treat fast growing emerging countries, such as India and China, whose carbon emissions are sharply increasing, separately from developing countries, characterizing them as major developing countries, and obligate them to achieve energy efficiency goals consisting of nation-specific and major industry-specific targets.

In the run-up to the 14 Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP14) to be held in Poland in December this year, the government will shortly submit the proposal to the UN. This is the first time for the Japanese government to come up with a specific proposal regarding the obligation of emerging countries, a major focus of attention in the upcoming framework talks. Emerging countries, such as China and India, are expected to fiercely oppose the proposal.

A major feature of the proposal is a focus on the categorization of main developing country, in addition to two other existing groups -- industrialized countries and developing countries -- under the present Kyoto Protocol. At present, industrialized countries are obliged to achieve a nation-specific emissions cap. However, since China, which is viewed as having become the largest emitter in the world, and India, the fifth largest emitter, are regarded as developing countries, there is no institutional way to stop them from increasing carbon emissions.

Under the Japanese plan, major developing countries will be mandated

to set an energy efficiency goal in such main industry areas as steel, cement, aluminum and electric power, as well as an efficiency target for energy conservation to be achieved by a country as a whole. Though it will not seek them to set a nation-specific emissions cap, which could hamper economic growth, it urges them to constrain carbon emissions, by obligating them to set an efficiency goal with the aim of urging them to conserve energy. Energy efficiency goals envisage a reduction in gas emissions when producing 1 ton of crude steel in the steel industry, for instance. As a nation-specific goal, the improvement of the ratio of gas emissions to the GDP is assumed.

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Guidelines for defining major developing countries will be worked out later. A "graduation" mechanism of main developing countries being upgraded to industrialized countries, once they meet designated conditions, will also be set. Other developing countries will be obligated just to compile an action program and check progress.

Regarding a base year (1990 under the Kyoto Protocol), more than one year will be set as base years, with 2006 or 2007, when the latest data are expected to become available, being the two choices in mind.

(10) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi: Yomiuri: Sankei: Tokyo Shimbun:
Land minister Nakayama resigns after gaffes: Kazuyoshi Kaneko to replace him

Mainichi:
Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma apologizes for hepatitis C infections via tainted products: Basic agreement signed

Nikkei:
Concern about economic slump becoming protracted: Global economic slowdown that started in U.S.

Akahata:
Improve corporate culture, General Secretary Ichita calls for in TV debate

(11) EDITORIALS

Asahi:
(1) Resignation of transport minister: Prime minister makes miscalculation
(2) Shenzhou 7: Bring China into international cooperation framework

Mainichi:
(1) Transport Minister Nakayama steps down due to sloppy blunder
(2) Junichiro Koizumi to step down: We want to hear summary of his reform drive from him

Yomiuri:
(1) Transport Minister Nakayama steps down: His statements lacked temperance
(2) Space ship Shenzhou: Japan also needs solid strategy

Nikkei:
(1) Thought on opening the country for human resources: Reform fabricated system involving unskilled laborers

Sankei:
(1) Resignation of Transport Minister Nakayama: Do not repeat words and actions that would erase confidence
(2) Release of ibises: It is important to protect before its extinction

Tokyo Shimbun:
(1) Resignation of transport minister: Hideous blunder
(2) Split of health insurance under government jurisdiction: Improve medical service with improved efficiency

Akahata:

(1) Consumption tax statement by Prime Minister Aso: Prevent in-stage hike

(12) Prime Minister's schedule, Sept. 25 & 26

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
September 27, 2008

Sept. 25

Afternoon

Arrived at Kennedy International Airport in New York. Met Australian Prime Minister Rudd at the Intercontinental Hotel. Held a joint press conference.

Evening

Delivered a speech at UN Headquarters. Later, met Bono, vocalist of the rock band U2. Talked without sitting down with U.S. State Secretary Rice and British Foreign Minister Miliband. Then met with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Night

Attended a dinner party hosted by Ban. Later met Iraqi President Talabani.

Sept. 26

Morning

Left New York by a government plane.

Prime Minister's schedule, Sept. 27

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

September 28, 2008

02:53

Arrived at Haneda Airport by a government plane.

03:35

Arrived at his private residence in Kamiyama-cho.

11:26

Took a walk around his residence.

14:06

Reported at the Imperial Palace on his return to Japan.

15:18

Met at the Kantei with Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura and deputy chief cabinet secretaries Matsumoto and Uruma.

16:40

Met Kawamura and Uruma. Kawamura stayed behind.

17:06

Arrived at his private office in Nagata-cho.

18:30

Returned to his private residence.

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Prime Minister's schedule, Sept. 28

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

September 29, 2008

06:44

Took a walk around his private residence in Kamiyama-cho.

09:17

Met Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura at the Kantei.

09:32

Met Construction and Transport Minister Nakayama, joined by Kawamura. Kawamura stayed behind.

10:01

Attended a special cabinet meeting.

11:24

Met LDP Secretary General Hosoda and New Komeito Secretary General Kitagawa, joined by Kawamura. Kawamura stayed behind.

12:58

Met Kawamura and Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Uruma. Kawamura stayed behind.

16:00

Met editorial writers from press companies. Later met TV news commentators. Then met reporters assigned to the Cabinet Office.

18:10

Met Kawamura. Joined by former Administrative Reform Minister Kaneko. Kawamura stayed behind.

19:44

Dined with his secretaries at the Chinese restaurant in the Hotel Okura.

21:58

Returned to his private residence.

SCHIEFFER